English as a Second Language Program (ESL)

Meeting the needs of students who are in the process of learning the English language while learning academic content.

Tips for teaching language and content effectively:

1. Preparation:

* Clearly define content standards/objectives
* Clearly define language standards/objectives
* Use supplementary materials to make lessons clear and meaningful
* Adapt content to all levels of student proficiency
* Provide meaningful and authentic activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities.

1. Building Background:

* Explicitly link concepts to students’ background experience
* Make clear links between students’ past learning and new concepts
* Emphasize key vocabulary

1. Comprehensible Input:

* Speak appropriately to accommodate students’ proficiency level
* Clearly explain academic tasks
* Use a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear – modeling, hands-on materials, visuals, demos, gestures, film clips…..

1. Strategies:

* Provide ample opportunities for students to use strategies
* Consistently use scaffolding techniques throughout lesson – think alouds, paraphrasing, partnering…
* Employ a variety of question types

1. Interaction:

* Provide frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion
* Group students to support language and content objectives – use at least 2 different structures during a lesson – pairs, triads, teams varied by language proficiency or interest
* Consistently afford sufficient wait time – let other students write down answers while waiting for one student to respond
* Give ample opportunities for clarification for concepts in L1, if possible – use bilingual classmates, native language materials, notes by students…

1. Practice/Application:

* Supply lots of hands-on materials
* Provide activities for students to apply content/language knowledge - discussing and doing make abstract concepts concrete; allow students to work in partners before working alone
* Integrate all language skills into each lesson - listening, speaking, reading, and writing

1. Lesson Delivery:

* Clearly support content objectives – objectives apparent throughout lesson
* Clearly support language objectives – give students ample opportunities to demonstrate language capabilities in speaking, reading, and writing
* Engage students 90 – 100% of the lesson – less “teacher talk”, no “down time”, students are actively working in whole groups, small groups, individually…
* Appropriately pace the lesson to students’ ability level

1. Review/Assessment:

* Provide comprehensive review of key vocabulary – teach, review, assess, teach…, use word study books, Content Word Wall
* Supply comprehensive review of key content concepts – review content directly related to objectives throughout lesson; use graphic organizers as review
* Regularly give feedback to students on their output – clarify, discuss, correct responses
* Conduct assessment of student comprehension and learning – use a variety of quick reviews: thumbs up-down, numbered wheels, small dry erase boards; include student self-assessment…

Source taken from: “Making Content Comprehensible for English Language Learners”, Echevarria, Vogt, Short

Contact Information:

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